**Domestic abuse:
Examples of age appropriate explanations to a child (life story)**

**What is my role as a social worker?**

“Hi, my name is [Your Name], and I’m here to help you and your family. I know there has been some fighting and shouting at home, and I want to make sure that you are safe and happy. I’m here to help make things better for you.

If you ever feel scared or upset, you can talk to me. I will listen and try to understand how you feel. I will also talk to your parents and help them understand how their actions are affecting you. Together, we will come up with a plan to make things better and keep everybody in your family safe.”

**What is domestic abuse?**

“Domestic abuse is when someone in your family, like a parent or sibling, is being mean or hurtful to another person in your family, like your mom, dad, or another sibling. This can happen in many ways, such as hitting, pushing, yelling, or saying mean things. It can also include things like controlling what someone does or who they talk to, or not letting them leave the house. This is not okay, and it can make the person being hurt feel very sad or scared. It’s important to know that it’s not their fault and they don’t deserve to be treated that way. Everyone in a family should be kind and respectful to each other. If someone in your family is hurting you or someone else, it’s important to tell a grown-up you trust. They can help make things better and keep you and your family safe.”

**Telling a trusted adult**

“Sometimes when adults argue or fight, it can be scary to watch or listen to. But it’s important to know that it’s not your fault. Mommy and Daddy are having a tough time, and it’s up to them to work out their problems. You don’t have to try to fix their problems or make them feel better. If you ever feel scared or upset, remember that you can tell a grown-up you trust. This could be a teacher, a coach, a family member, or a friend’s parent. They will listen to you and help keep you safe. It’s always okay to ask for help when you need it. Remember, you are important and loved, and there are people who care about you and want to help you.”

**Telling a child that their father was asked to leave a family home because of him being abusive**

“Your dad has been asked to leave home for a while because he was hurting your mom. That’s not okay, and it’s important to keep everyone safe. This means that your dad won’t be living at home for now, but that doesn’t mean he doesn’t love you. Your dad is working on learning how to be kind and respectful to your mom and your family. So, he’s getting help from other grown-ups who are experts in helping people who have trouble being nice to others. He might go to classes or talk to someone who can help him learn to be kind and respectful. Your dad will need to work really hard and show that he’s learned how to be kind and respectful before he can come back home. This might take some time. I know this might be confusing and scary for you, but I want to make sure that you and your family are safe and happy.”

**Telling a child why they were removed to foster care**

*Older child*

“Sometimes when there is fighting or hurting between grown-ups in a home, it can be dangerous for children to stay there. It is never okay for anyone to hurt another person, and we need to make sure that you are safe and protected.

That’s why we need to find you a safe place to stay for a while. A place where there won’t be any fighting or hurting, and where you can be happy and healthy. This place is called foster care. It’s where another family will look after you and make sure you have everything you need.

While you’re living with your foster family, you’ll still be able to go to school, see your friends, and do things you enjoy. Your social worker and other adults will check in with you and your foster family to make sure you are doing okay and to answer any questions you may have.

I know this might feel scary and confusing right now, but it’s important to remember that it’s not your fault and you didn’t do anything wrong. You are a special and important person and we want to make sure you’re safe and happy.”

*Younger child:*

“Sometimes when your mom and dad fight or hurt each other at home, it’s not safe for you to stay there. It’s never okay for anyone to hurt another person, and we need to make sure that you’re safe.

So we need to find you a safe place to stay for a little while. It’s called foster care, where another family will take care of you and make sure you have everything you need. You’ll still be able to go to school, play with your friends, and do things you enjoy.

You might feel scared or confused right now, but it’s important to remember that you didn’t do anything wrong. You’re very special and important to me, and I want to make sure you’re safe and happy.”

**Telling a child they are moving with their mother to a refuge**

“Sometimes when people are hurting each other at home, it’s not safe for you and your family to stay there. You and your mum are going to move to a special place called a refuge, where you will be safe and protected. This is because your father has been hurting your mother, and it’s not okay for anyone to hurt someone else.

The refuge is a place where women with children can go when they need help and support. There will be other families there who have had to leave their homes too, so you will be able to meet other children and make new friends. There will also be grown-ups there who will help you and your mum feel safe and happy, and they will help you understand what is happening and why you needed to leave.

You and your mum will stay at the refuge for a little while, until you can find a new home where you can be safe and happy together. Remember, it’s not your fault that this happened, and you deserve to be safe and loved. There are people who care about you and want to help you, and they will be there for you every step of the way.”

**Story for a child about witnessing domestic abuse & the importance of telling their social worker**

Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Sophie. Sophie lived with her mommy and daddy in a big house with a garden full of flowers. One day, Sophie’s parents started fighting and it was really scary. Sophie felt afraid and didn’t know what to do.

She decided to hide under her bed until the fighting stopped. Sophie felt safer under the bed and could still hear everything that was happening, but she didn’t have to see it.

As Sophie was hiding, she felt very sad and worried. She didn’t like hearing her parents yelling and hurting each other. But she knew that she had to stay quiet and stay hidden until it was safe to come out.

After a while, Sophie heard her parents stop fighting and things became quiet. She slowly came out from under her bed and saw that her parents had stopped arguing. But Sophie still felt scared and didn’t know what to do.

The next day, a lady named Edita, who was a social worker, came to visit Sophie at her home. Sophie felt a bit shy at first but she liked Edita and decided to tell her what had happened the night before. She told Edita that her parents had been fighting and that she had hidden under her bed until it was over.

Edita listened carefully to what Sophie said and told her that it wasn’t her fault that her parents had been fighting. She also told Sophie that sometimes grown-ups have problems and that they need help to solve them.

Sophie felt much better after talking to Edita. She learned that she could talk to someone she trusted when she was scared or worried. She also learned that there were people who could help her and her family feel better.

From that day on, Sophie knew that she could always talk to Edita or another grown-up she trusted if she felt scared or worried. She also learned that it’s important to ask for help when she needed it.

**Story for a child about what they can do when domestic abuse is happening in their house**

Once upon a time, there was a little boy named Jack who loved his parents very much. But sometimes when they argued, they started shouting and hitting each other, and it made Jack feel scared and sad.

One day, while Jack’s parents were fighting, Jack remembered what his social worker had told him about what to do when he felt scared. So he went to his room, closed the door, and took deep breaths until he felt calmer.

Then Jack remembered what his social worker had told him about staying safe during arguments. He knew that he shouldn’t try to stop his parents from fighting or get in the middle of them, because he might get hurt. So Jack found a safe place to hide in his wardrobe.

While Jack was hiding, he knew that he could call his grandmother, who always made him feel better with her kind words and hugs. Jack also had a special toy that he held onto tightly, and it helped him feel safe and calm.

After the fighting was over, Jack knew that it was important to tell someone what had happened. So when he went to school, he told his teacher, who listened to him and made sure that he was safe.

Even though it was scary when his parents fought, Jack knew that he could do many things to keep himself safe.

One day, when Jack’s parents were arguing again, the situation got out of control, and Jack knew that he needed to do something to keep himself and his family safe. He remembered what his social worker had told him about calling the police in case of danger.

So Jack quietly went to his room and called 999. He told the operator that his parents were fighting and he was scared. The operator told him that the police were on their way and that he should stay on the line until they arrived.

Soon, the police arrived at Jack’s house and spoke to his parents. The police explained that the fighting and shouting were not okay and that they needed to stop. The police also made sure that Jack was safe and unharmed.

After the police left, Jack felt much better knowing that he and his family were safe. The police had helped him understand that he didn’t have to be scared and that there were people who could help him.

Jack’s social worker also came to visit him and his family, and they worked together to find ways to help his parents deal with their arguments in a healthy and safe way. Jack knew that it wasn’t his fault that his parents were fighting and that he could always count on his social worker, teacher, and the police to keep him safe.